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## Viewing cable 09TELAVIV2245, ISRAELIS MULL RESPONSE TO TURKISH "HUMILIATIONS"

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09TELAVIV2245**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09TELAVIV2245</a>	<a href="#">2009-10-13 15:58</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">SECRET</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Tel Aviv</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/06/14/115798/armenian-genocide-bills-ramp-up.html>

VZCZCXRO8735  
OO RUEHROV  
DE RUEHTV #2245/01 2861558  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
O 131558Z OCT 09  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE 6901  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3792  
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHNO/USCINCEUR FMFO BRUSSELS BE PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 002245

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/13/2019  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MASS](#) [TU](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAELIS MULL RESPONSE TO TURKISH "HUMILIATIONS"

Classified By: Ambassador James B. Cunningham, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

11. (S) Summary. Turkey's decision to cancel Israel's participation in the joint Turkey-U.S.-Italy-NATO-Israel Anatolian Eagle air exercise received heavy media coverage

here October 11-13. Although the IDF adhered to agreed language on the international portion of the exercise being postponed and not cancelled, the Turkish decision to exclude Israel was the source of wide-ranging commentary. Some sources suggested that Israel should not put up with Turkey's "humiliating" treatment of Israel, while others, including Defense Minister Barak and Deputy Foreign Minister Ayalon, made public statements stressing the ongoing strategic importance to Turkey to Israel. Sources in the Israeli NSC and IDF have told us that while discussions of how to handle the deteriorating relationship with Turkey are ongoing, no decisions have been made thus far either to retaliate or to make gestures toward Ankara. Our IDF source stressed that the Turkish military appeared to have been embarrassed by Prime Minister Erdogan's decision, but they believe that the Turkish General Staff no longer has the power or the will to challenge Erdogan. Israelis are carefully following the development of Turkey's strategic cooperation with Syria and are also wary of Turkey's attitude toward Iran. All of our contacts, and most media reports, have stressed Israeli appreciation for the U.S. decision to pull out of Anatolian Eagle, noting that this was an important signal to Erdogan. We doubt that in the present environment the GOI will be inclined to make concessions to Turkey's desire to play a larger humanitarian role in Gaza. End Summary.

¶2. (C) GOI contacts have been in touch with us since October 3 regarding Turkey's decision to exclude Israel from the Anatolian Eagle joint exercise, but the issue stayed out of the Israeli media until the end of the Succot holidays October 11. It then became a matter of competing headlines, with some media, especially the conservative, English-language Jerusalem Post taking the lead in suggesting ways that Israel could retaliate, while other media have stressed the view that Israel continues to have a huge investment in maintaining a strategic relationship with Turkey, Erdogan's anti-Israeli posturing notwithstanding. Among the retaliatory measures mentioned are cancelling the sale of Israeli drone technology to Turkey and refusing to respond to Turkey's annual requests for Israeli help in blocking the Armenian Genocide bill in the Congress. The liberal Ha'aretz newspaper reported October 12 that MFA Director General Gal had convened a special MFA working group to review Israeli policy toward Turkey, but in contrast to the usual leaks about sensitive discussions here, MFA contacts declined to reveal the content of these discussions, one indication of the seriousness with which the MFA is handling the Turkey discussions.

¶3. (S) IDF Deputy J-5 Brigadier General Yossi Heimann told PolCouns October 12 that the MOD and IDF remain eager to preserve the strategic relationship that they have developed with the Turkish military over the past 15 years, but Heimann admitted that Israel is also sensitive to repeated insults and slights by Prime Minister Erdogan and is deeply worried about Erdogan's inclinations to develop Turkey's relations with Syria and Iran. Heimann assessed that the Turkish General Staff no longer has the power or the inclination to challenge unpalatable decisions by Turkey's civilian political leadership, adding that to some extent, Israel's image in Turkey is associated with the Turkish military, making the Israeli-Turkish strategic relationship an easy target for Erdogan. Heimann stressed that the Turkish J-3 had been embarrassed and apologetic when they initially informed the Israeli defense attach in Ankara of the decision to bar Israel from participating in Anatolian Eagle.

"We also have our pride," Heimann said, noting that there is discussion of cancelling the drone project, but he stressed that no decision has been made. The idea of transferring advanced military technology to Turkey is now coming under increased scrutiny due to Israeli uncertainty about the direction of Turkish policy toward Israel's enemies. Heimann said the entire IDF General Staff and the MOD leadership were greatly appreciative of the U.S. decision to cancel participation in Anatolian Eagle as well as to urge Italy and NATO to follow suit. Heimann noted that Erdogan may have misunderstood tensions between the Obama Administration and the Netanyahu Government as an indication of reduced U.S.

support for Israel. It was therefore vitally important to Israel that the U.S. send the signal that it sent regarding Anatolian Eagle.

¶4. (S) Israeli NSC senior adviser Eitan Naeh, an expert on Turkey and the Caucasus, provided PolCouns with a strategic overview of Israeli-Turkish relations October 7. Naeh, who served as DCM in the Israeli Embassy in Ankara in the late 1990s and was later Ambassador to Azerbaijan, said he has concluded that even at the height of Israeli-Turkish cooperation, Israel had overly high expectations of Turkey's potential contributions to the regional stability. Naeh suggested that Israel's ties to Turkey have gradually deteriorated as the Turkish secular elite has gradually ceded power to the Islamist AK Party. Naeh said he considers Foreign Minister Davutoglu to be as much of an opponent of the relationship with Israel as PM Erdogan, though he described Davutoglu as less emotional than Erdogan and more cautious in his rhetoric.

¶5. (S) Naeh also indicated that the GOI is engaged in a review of the long-term implications of the shift in Turkey's regional policies. He said they see the new Turkish strategic relationship with Syria as the mirror image of strategic relations with Israel in the 1990s, and are very concerned about GOT comments critical of the idea of imposing harsher sanctions on Iran. Naeh expressed skepticism about Turkish claims to the U.S. that they send tough messages to the Iranians in private. He agreed that Turkish public opinion wants good relations with all of Turkey's neighbors, with the apparent exception of Israel, thus reinforcing Erdogan and Davutoglu's regional policy inclinations.

¶6. (C) Yediot Aharonot columnist Alex Fishman, Israel's leading defense and national security correspondent, lamented to us October 13 that Israel had failed to see the signs of a deteriorating relationship with Turkey for a number of years, and thus missed possible opportunities to adjust Israeli policies. Fishman said the Israeli Air Force stopped flying joint exercises in Turkish air space in 2002, both because the U.S. offered better exercise opportunities but also because of Turkish political sensitivities since the Second Intifada. Fishman said he had covered Turkey's deployment of armored units to the Syrian border in 2006 in a successful effort to pressure Damascus to expel PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. Fishman and Naeh separately both noted that for years after this, Israeli commentators discussed the "Turkish option" for dealing with Syria, but now Turkish border guards are conducting joint exercises with their Syrian counterparts. Fishman noted that Defense Minister Barak continues to be a firm advocate of trying to preserve at least the semblance of a strategic relationship with Turkey.

¶7. (S) Comment. Following Operation Cast Lead and Erdogan's rhetorical attack on Shimon Peres at the Davos conference, the Turkish embassy in Tel Aviv repeatedly mentioned to us the ongoing cooperation afforded by the Israeli MOD to the Turkish Red Crescent Society's humanitarian assistance programs in Gaza. Turkish diplomats also noted signs of restored Israeli popular confidence in Turkey as a friendly country, pointing to record-breaking levels of Israeli tourism to Turkey last summer. The Israeli media October 13 has reported a statements by Davutoglu and other senior officials playing down the tensions with Israel and suggesting that relations remain on track. PM Erdogan, however, continues to make headlines with his attacks on Israel's Gaza policy as well as his suggestion to Turkish university students that they learn from the Jews how to make money from scientific research. In the current environment, it strikes us as doubtful that the GOI will be interested in offering gestures to the Turks in order to improve the fraying bilateral relationship.